



New Infant Feeding Guidelines

New research on feeding babies is showing that it is time to make some changes in what we recommend about introducing solid foods. Here are the latest recommendations for WIC parents with the **new changes** highlighted in bold type:

When to Feed:

- **Start introducing solid foods around 6 months of age, instead of 4 to 6 months.**
- **Baby needs to show all the signs that s/he is ready to start solid foods** (see details in new pamphlets).

What to Feed:

- **Start with an iron-rich food, such as baby cereal, around 6 months - after that, you no longer need to start certain foods at specific ages.**
- Offer a variety of healthy foods appropriate for baby (see details in new pamphlets).
- Pay attention to the textures of baby's food, going from smooth to mashed to chopped to tiny pieces.
- **Water and juice are not recommended before 6 months, and juice is not needed in the first year.**

How to Feed:

- **Pay close attention to how baby lets you know that s/he is hungry or full.**
- Sit with your baby. Feeding time is a great time for bonding with baby.
- Keep trying new foods – babies, as well as toddlers, may need to try a new food 10 times or more before they like it!
- Be patient – babies need lots of practice to learn to eat. Early eating can be messy.

What's the Research Behind the New Guidelines?

The following resources provided the guidance for WIC's recommendations:

- *Start Healthy Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers* (2004)
- American Academy of Pediatrics *Pediatric Nutrition Handbook* (2004)
- *FITS (Feeding Infants and Toddlers Study)* (2004, 2006)

Frequently Asked Questions

Will ISIS change to issue infant cereal at 6 months?

The food packages, including those for infants, will change in the next year. The age to begin issuing infant cereal will be determined at that time. All changes to ISIS will be made at the same time.

What can agencies do now when ISIS issues infant cereal at 5 months?

Staff can tailor the food package to remove cereal. Or provide cereal if, after consultation with the participant, staff determines that the baby is ready.

In what languages will the new infant feeding handouts be available?

The new pamphlets, "Feed Me! Birth to 6 Months" and "Feed Me! 6 to 12 Months," will be available initially in English and Spanish. Chinese and Vietnamese will be added later, similar to our other "core" education materials.

Want more information? For more information on the infant feeding recommendations see the new pamphlets (coming soon), check our website (new information to be posted soon), or contact Poppy Strode at MStrode@dhs.ca.gov or 916-928-8627.

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